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INCREDIBLE ORIGIN ISSUE

SPECIAL
NO. 1

Summer, 1987
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POPEYE®

BORNED TO THE SEA!



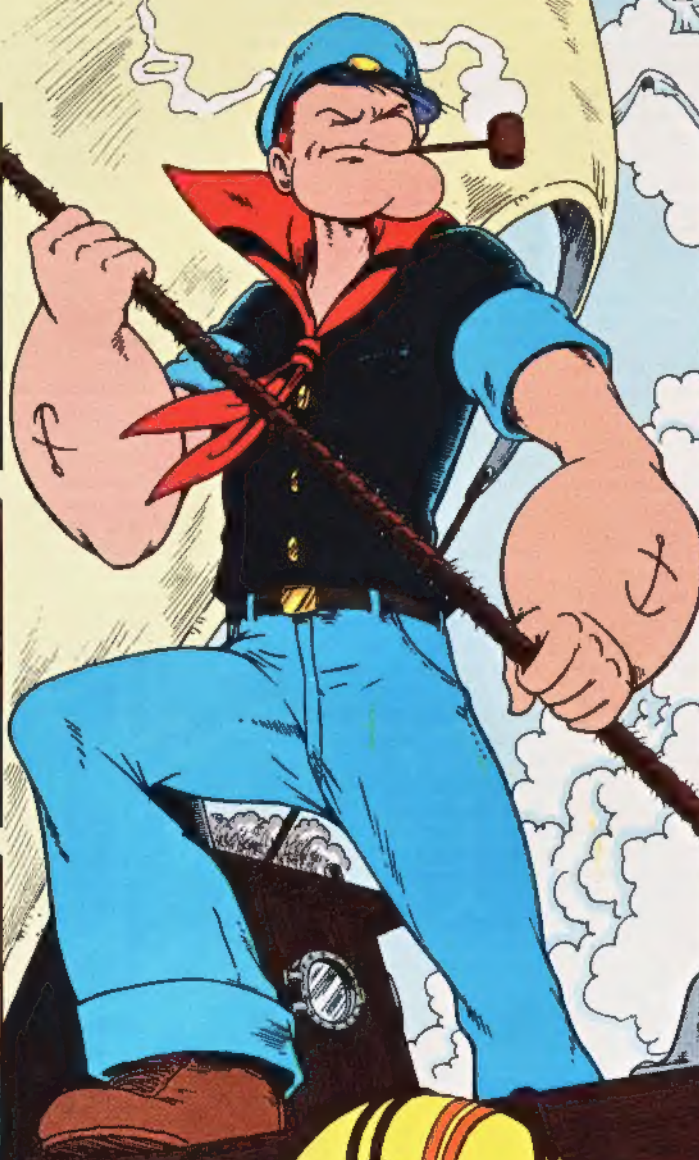
FOOPDECK



BRUTUS



DAN O'MITE



ROXY



WIMPY



WATASSNOZZLE

INTRODUCTION

I first got a chance to write Popeye after Charlton discontinued the title, and Gold Key picked it up. They gave the account to George Wildman, and George gave me a shot at writing it. One of his previous writers, Joe Gill, always wrote "fishing" stories, according to George, and another, Nick Cuti, always wrote "werewolf" stories. (I respect both of these writers, by the way. Joe laughs when anyone claims Stan Lee has written the most comic book stories. Joe used to write a dozen a week, for years and years, at Charlton. And he readily admits that he might have repeated a plot or a line of dialogue now and then. Nick, another prolific writer, and friend of twenty years, probably didn't write more than one werewolf script for Popeye, but if George didn't like werewolves, that would be one too many.)

But he liked my scripts, and so did our editors at Gold Key. (We went through three of them.)

George was also my boss, the executive editor at Charlton, and the only person in the comics department who had a title. Which was definitely on purpose. Of the two hundred or so employees of the company, only about a dozen had titles.

George had an image of Popeye as he was in the Fleischer cartoons. His favorite comic strip from his impressionable youth was Smokey Stover by Bill Holman. Frantic action in every panel. Well, Smokey Stover is a classic in its own right, but it's not Thimble Theatre by E. C. Segar and it's not Popeye by Bud Sagendorf, who had been the immortal sailor's most enduring taskmaster. So George and I had an uneasy five-year partnership. I could influence how the feature was handled, but George had the final say. I wrote and lettered about twenty issues, and we did a couple of children's books and some bubble gum cards together, and I'm proud of a few of those stories.

Nobody said we couldn't, so we did book-length tales, and tried some pretty outrageous plots. I would act out bits of business for George, trying to make him laugh, and if you can look at Wildman's drawings without prejudice, he turned out some comical "big foot" cartoons.

The executives at King Features thought his Popeye was first-rate, apparently, because George had the comic book franchise

for years. Of course, Sagendorf's version was still the real Popeye during that period, and rightfully so.

Bud Sagendorf . . . what a genius. And dismissed as just another hack by many who should know better. It's a shame. Sagendorf's comic books were classics, completely his own, with a fascinating unique environment for the cast. He would fashion long, convoluted plots, with Popeye lost in strange places for pages, ruminating about his fate and the fate of the universe. Brilliant stream-of-consciousness tales, with plenty of action and suspense, and silly, clever cartooning that carried it all beautifully.

For decades, Bud's Daily and Sunday strips succeeded in reaching enough newspapers all over the world to keep it going fifty years after the strip's creator died. By decree of the syndicate, Bud was obligated to keep the strip universal enough that other people of all races in every nation of the world could understand and appreciate the gags.

It's more difficult to do than you might think. Than the critics think, anyhow. Ah, genius. Rare and elusive. Impossible to fake.

I had the pleasure of meeting and visiting with Bud Sagendorf when I was just starting to write the comics, and his advice and philosophy of approach to each character was an inspiration I'll always be grateful for.

Bud had been a teenage apprentice to E. C. Segar when his mentor died. I can identify with that because I had been a teenage idolater of Wally Wood, and an apprentice to that genius, on and off, for twenty years, until my mentor died, at age 52, in 1981.

Popeye and the rest of the cast have different personalities as put through their paces by every author, but every reader as well has definite ideas about how the characters behave and what they should look like.

I choose to believe Popeye fascinates so many people because he's the perfect hero: straightforward and confident, fearless in battle but good-natured with his pals. And ardently devoted to Olive, his "steady" for over half a century. And because Olive is his equal in every particular, in her feminine fashion, both exasperating and endearing at the same time. And because Wimpy is as perfect as he is, so utterly unredeemable that his every utterance is cause for suspicion.

But I'm sure more people associate Popeye with the TV cartoons or even the 1980 movie than with any of his comic strip or comic book adventures. They were not the same characters at all. Popeye on the screen was an ornery little twerp, but in the comics he could be a mysterious enigma, a superhero with no pretensions, stalwart in every crisis. The fact is, the characters themselves are Segar's greatest achievement. More important than the gallons of ink he spread on paper, or the inspired dialogue that made his the most untimely death in 1938. (The same year of my birth, but I'm not insinuating anything except coincidence by mentioning it. Popeye will still be around when this generation passes from the scene and another bunch of anonymous pretenders put imperfect words in his mouth and animation to those powerful fists.)

Before joining the others on this project, I didn't know what kind of a Popeye they had in mind, and they couldn't have known how I thought he should look, but I don't consider our efforts — whatever their worth or worthlessness — to be sacrilegious to the memory of his creator. Elzie Segar was a bigger man than that.

Yes, all you professors and other self-styled experts out there, that one-and-only Segar was the creator and all-time-best Popeye writer and artist there ever was or will be. All the rest of us who have worked in whatever capacity on his characters are only "other artists," lesser on every scale, and unworthy of sharpening his pencils. But I'll say one thing, I'd still rather write dialogue for his timeless characters than any other fictional cast ever assembled. And as for slopping ink on paper, it's a pleasure to embellish the old one-eyed wonder.

Bill Pearson

Send all letters of comment to POP-EYE % Ocean Comics, 88 Tiernan Ave., Warwick, RI 02886.

Bob and Kathy Palin
Publishers and Editors-in-chief

Bill Pearson
Story Editor

E. C. Segar
Creator

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POPEYE "BORNED TO THE SEA"

CREATED BY E.C. SEGAR

HE WAS BORN DURING A TYPHOON OFF THE COAST OF SANTA MONICA A LONG TIME AGO. TYPHOONS IS PURELY AWFUL THINGS.

HOLY SMOKE!
THERE'S A BOAT
OUT THERE!

HANG IT ALL,
IT'S THE CAPTAIN
KIDD! POOPDECK'S
PIECE O' JUNK!

POOPDECK KIDD DEARLY LOVED A ROUGH SEA. HE WASN'T AFERAID OF NOTHINK, WHICH TELLS YA POOPDECK WASN'T A RIGHT MAN WHERE BRAINS WAS CONCERNED.

NOTHINK LIKE A
LITTLE WEATHER TO
LIVEN UP A DAY,
I'S ALWAYS SAYS.

YOU'RE
GONNA KILL US
ALL, YOU
IJOT!

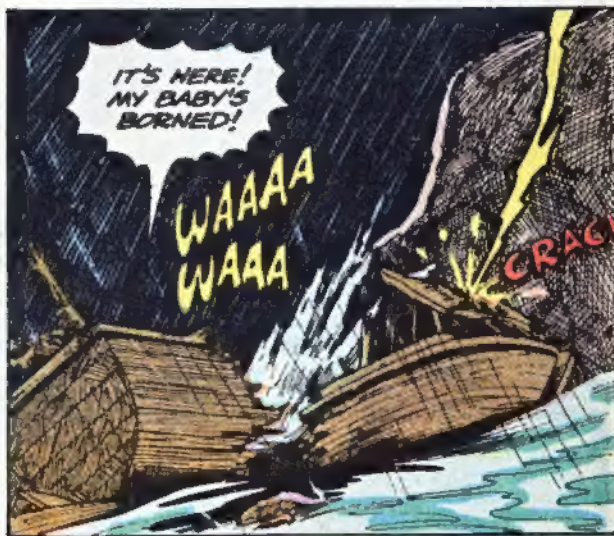
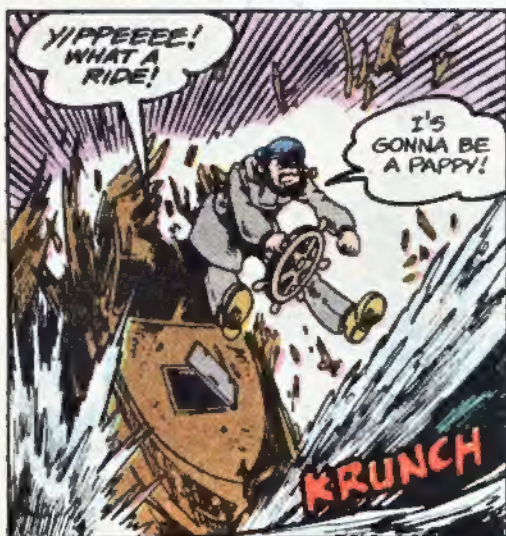
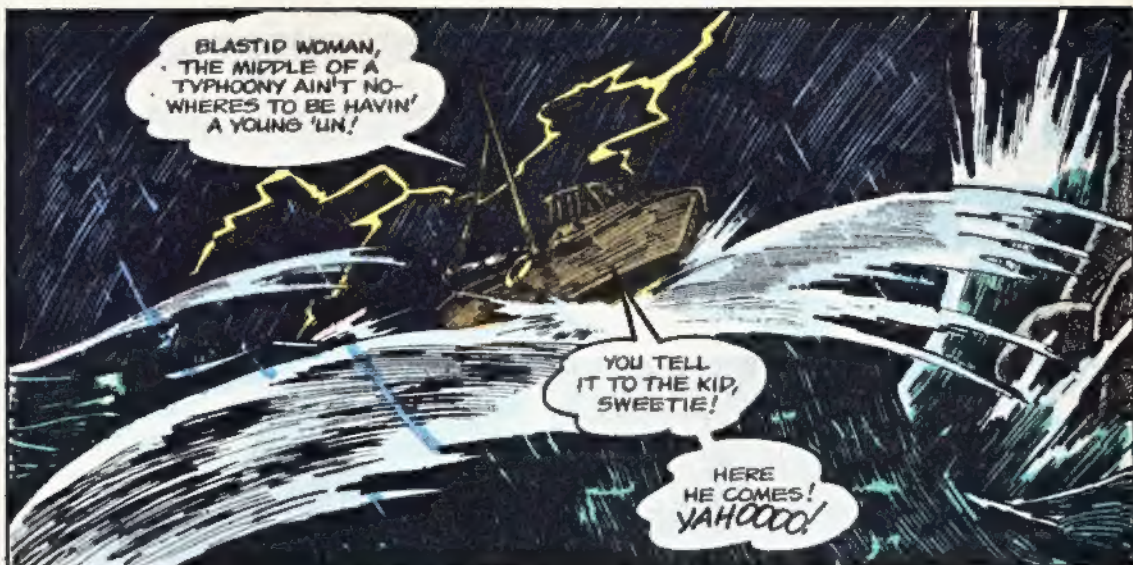
THERE WAS ONE THING POOPDECK WAS MIGHTILY SCARED OF--BEING A FATHER!

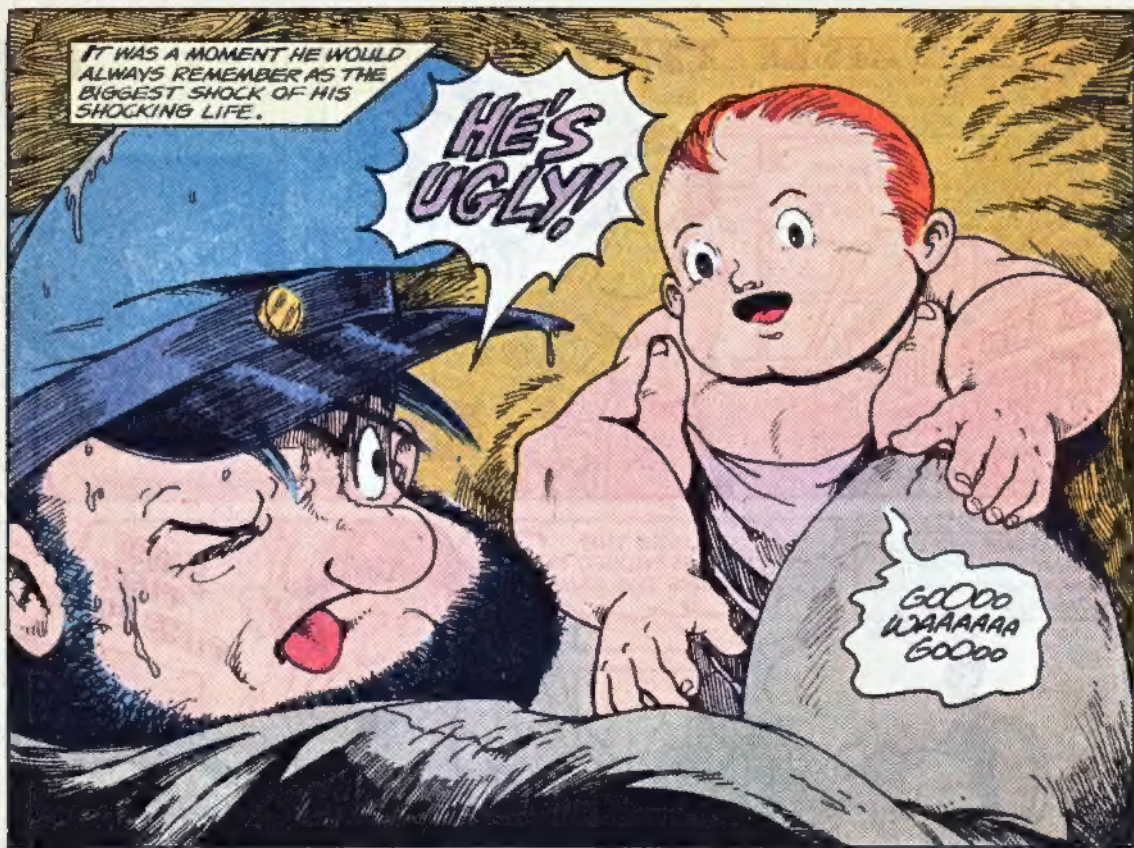
WHY COULDN'T
WE JUST STAY ON
MOOSEHEAD ISLAND
AND HAVE OUR
CHILD?

'CAUSE I ONLY
WANTS THE BEST
DOCTORS WHIPPIN'
UP MY PROGENY.

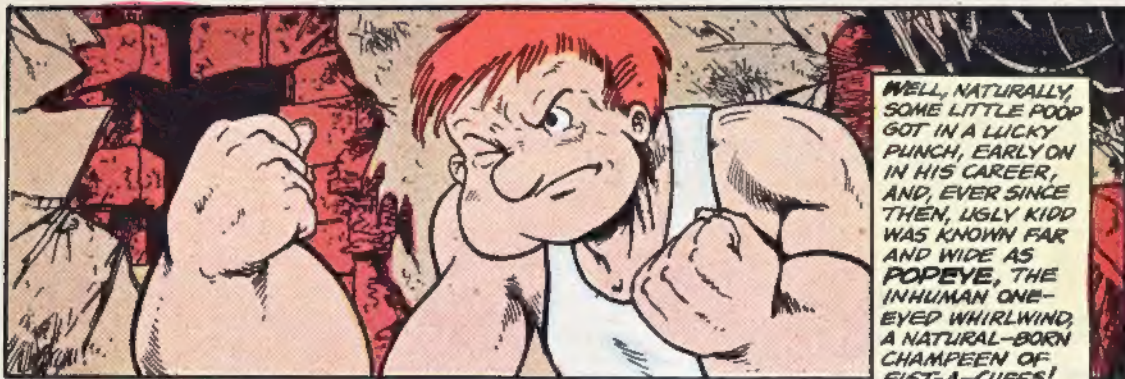
THE ONLY THING
THAT'S GONNA WHIP
US IS GONNA BE A WHALE
IF WE ALL DROWNS, AND
I'M ABOUT DUE!

STORY--RON FORTIER
PENCILS--BEN DUNN
INKS, LETTERS, EDITOR--
BILL PEARSON
COLORS KATHY PALIN

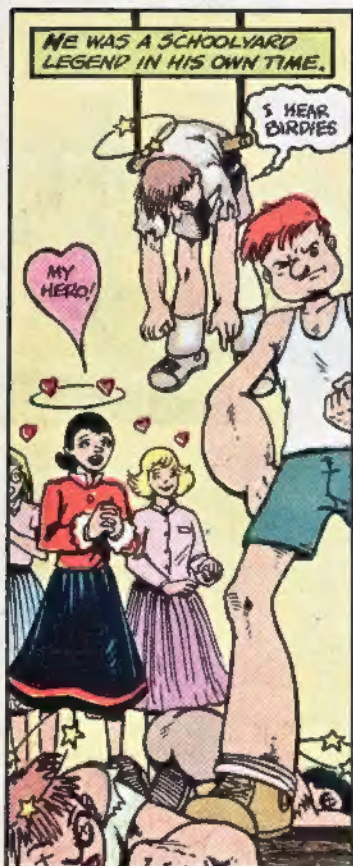








WELL, NATURALLY, SOME LITTLE POOP GOT IN A LUCKY PUNCH, EARLY ON IN HIS CAREER, AND, EVER SINCE THEN, UGLY KIDD WAS KNOWN FAR AND WIDE AS POPEYE, THE INHUMAN ONE-EYED WHIRLWIND, A NATURAL-BORN CHAMPEEN OF FIST-A-CUFFS!



HE WAS A SCHOOLYARD LEGEND IN HIS OWN TIME.

I HEAR BIRDIES

MY HERO!

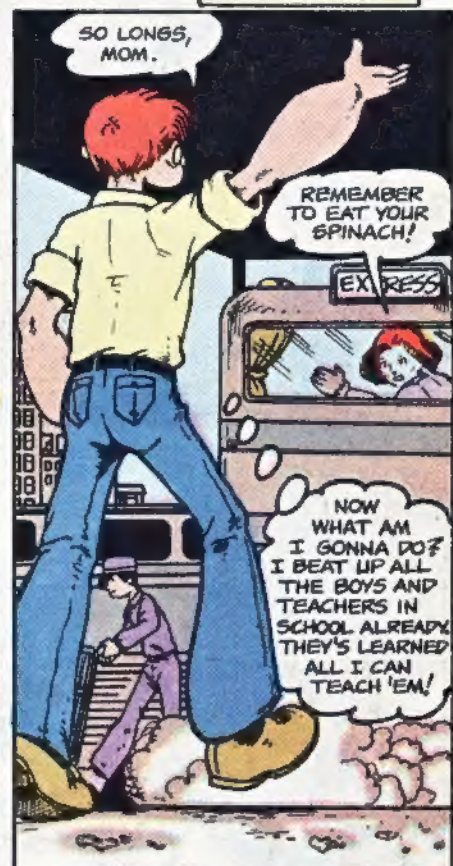


THE LOVE OF THE SEA AND FARAWAY PLACES WAS A FAMILY TRAIT...

I SEE IN THE GEOGRAPHIC WHERE THEY AIN'T GOT NO ROLLER DERBY IN ZAIRE, SON...

IT'S CAN'T LET THOSE POOR NATIVES REMAINS SO DEPRAVED.

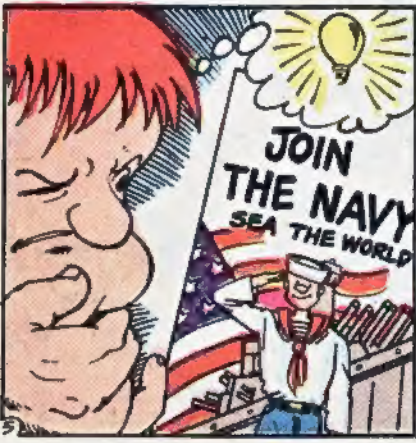
YOUSE A REAL SAINT, MA.



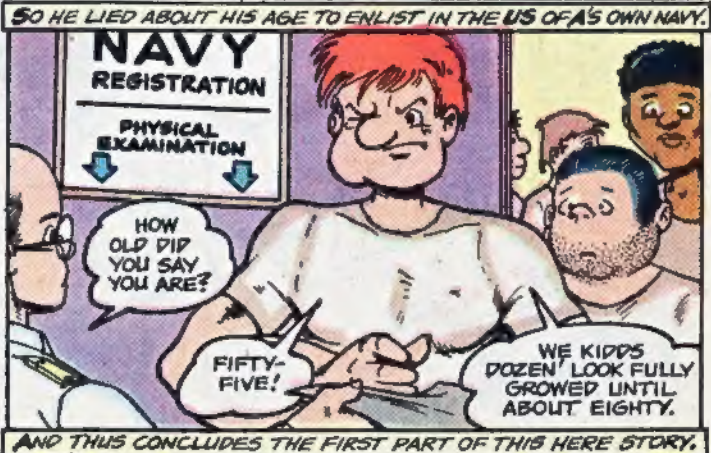
SO LONGS, MOM.

REMEMBER TO EAT YOUR SPINACH!

NOW WHAT AM I GONNA DO? I BEAT UP ALL THE BOYS AND TEACHERS IN SCHOOL ALREADY. THEY'S LEARNED ALL I CAN TEACH 'EM!



JOIN THE NAVY
SEA THE WORLD



SO HE LIED ABOUT HIS AGE TO ENLIST IN THE US OFA'S OWN NAVY.

NAVY
REGISTRATION

PHYSICAL
EXAMINATION

HOW
OLD DID
YOU SAY
YOU ARE?

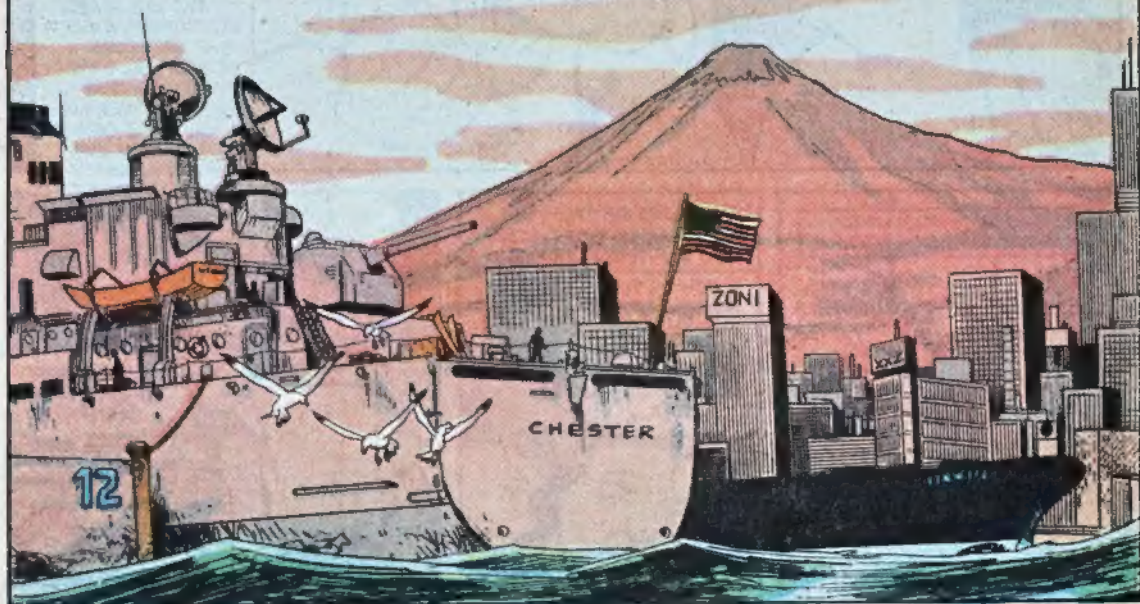
FIFTY-
FIVE!

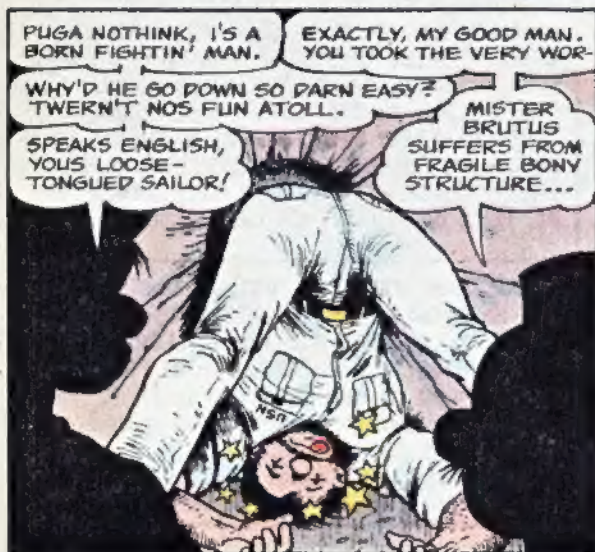
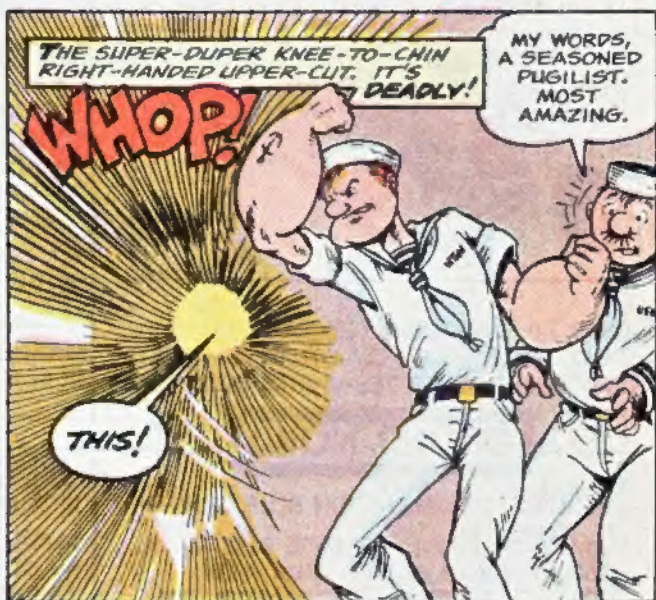
WE KIDDS
DOZEN! LOOK FULLY
GROWN UP UNTIL
ABOUT EIGHTY.

AND THIS CONCLUDES THE FIRST PART OF THIS HERE STORY.

CHAPTER TWO

AFTER FINISHING HIS BOOT TRAINING, THE NEW SWABEE IS ASSIGNED TO THE MIGHTY FIGHTING SHIP, **U.S.S. CHESTER**, CURRENTLY STATIONED IN FAR-OFF TOKYO, JAPAN...







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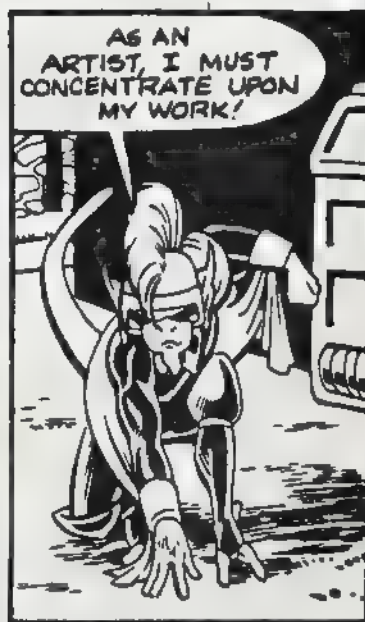
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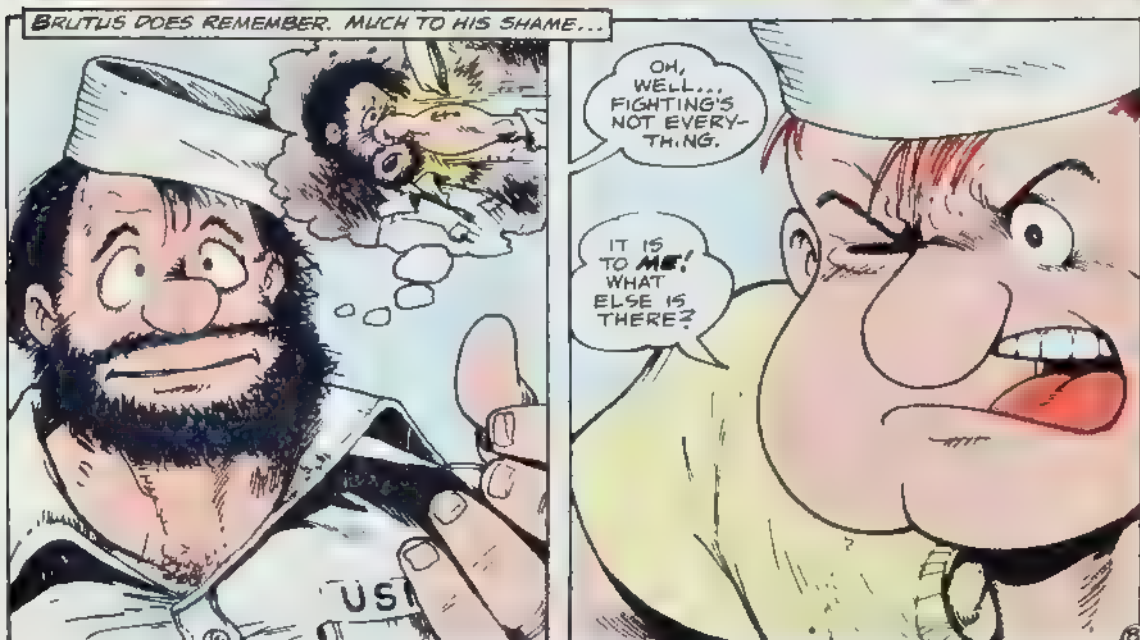
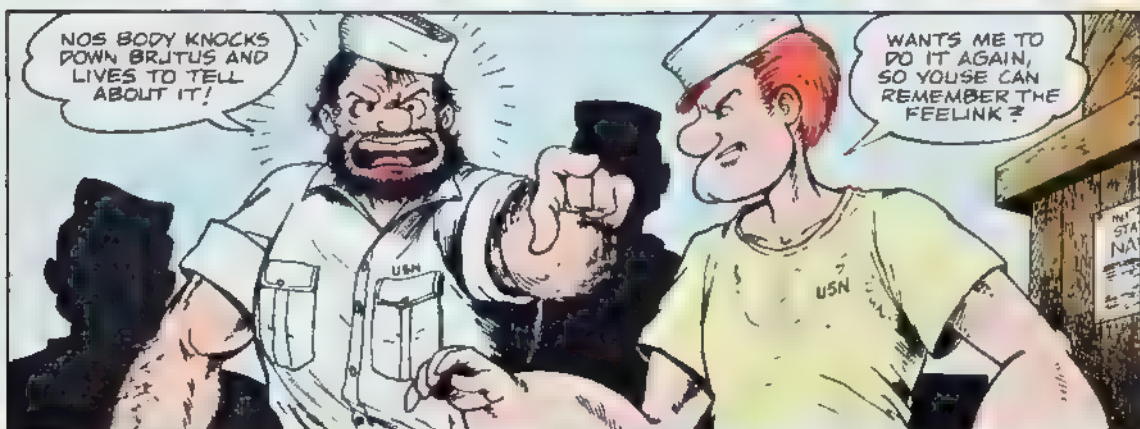
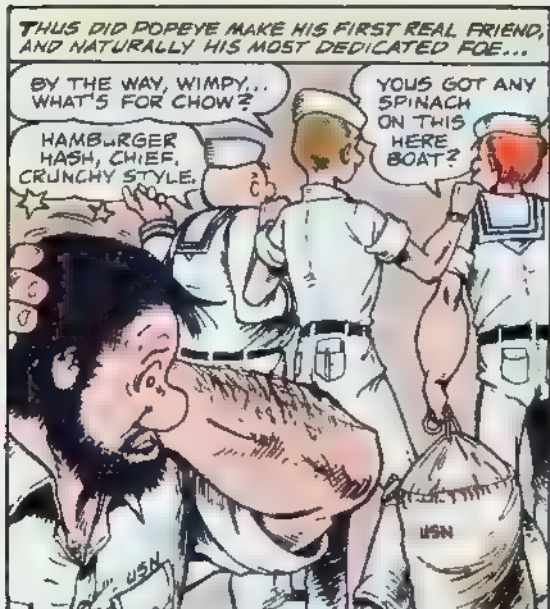


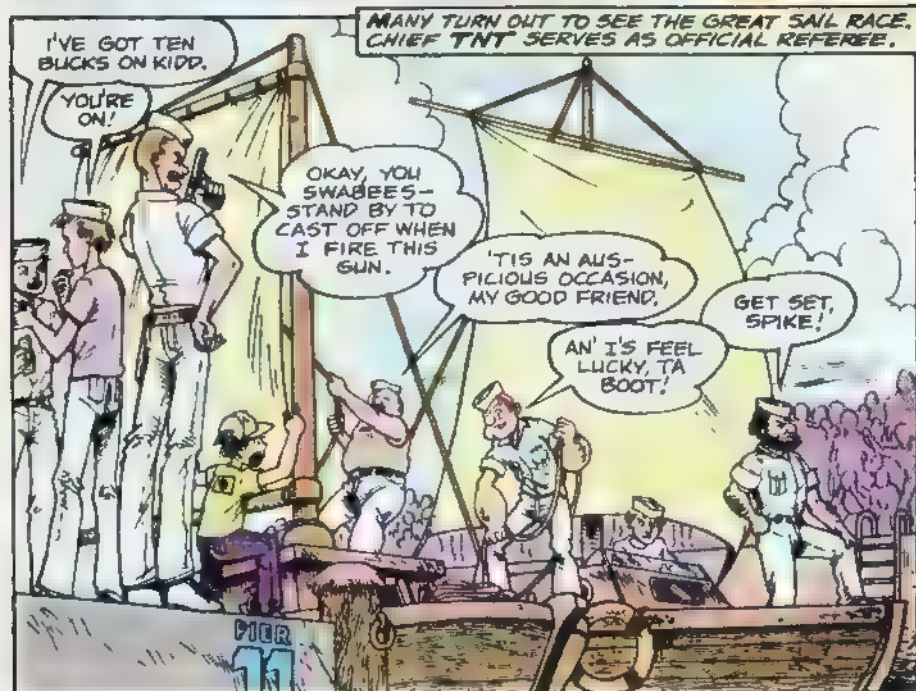
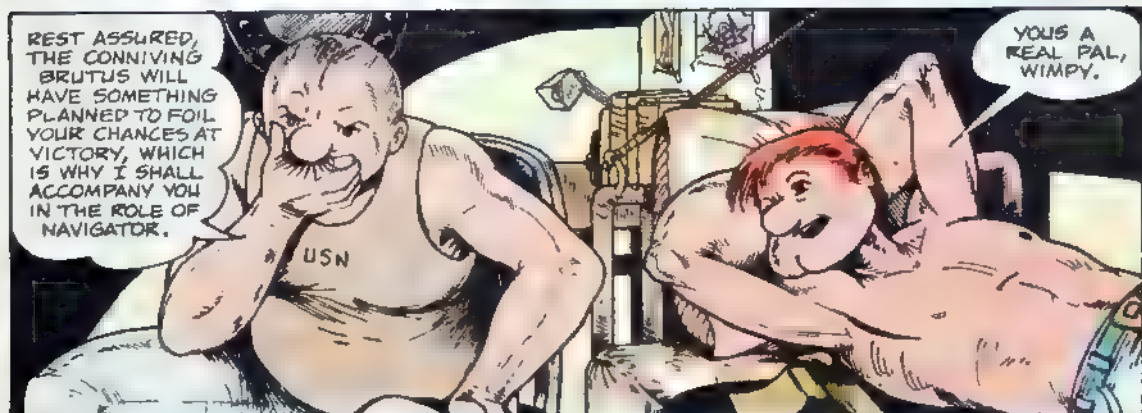
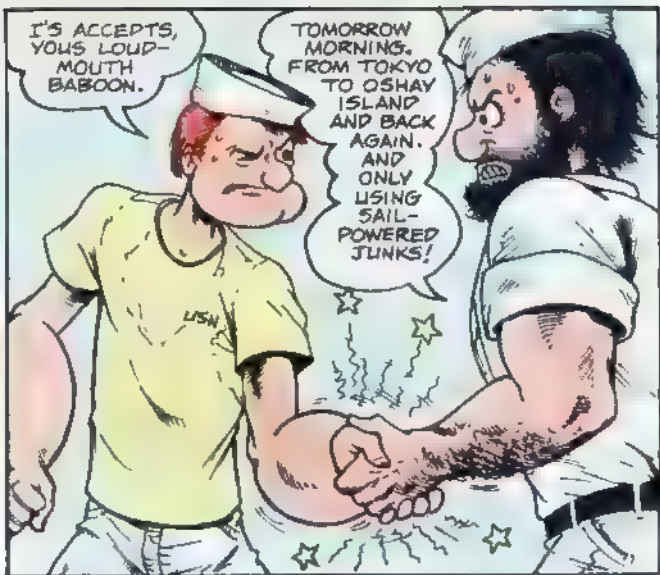
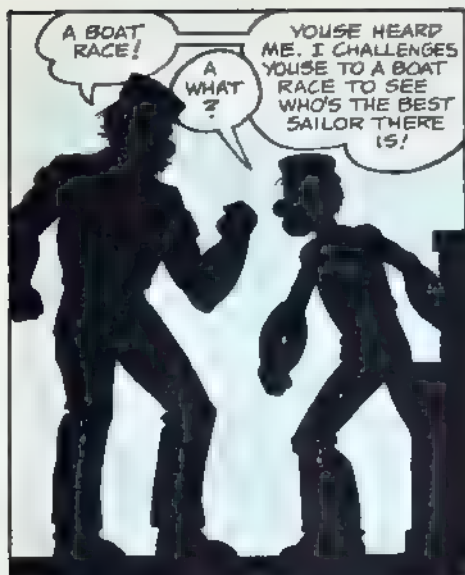
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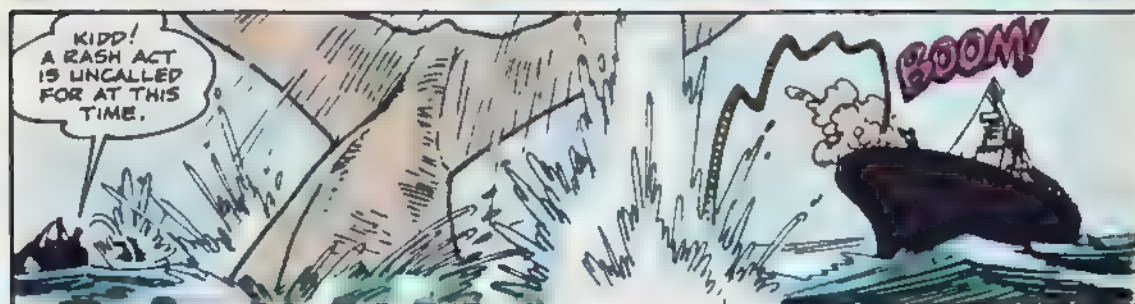
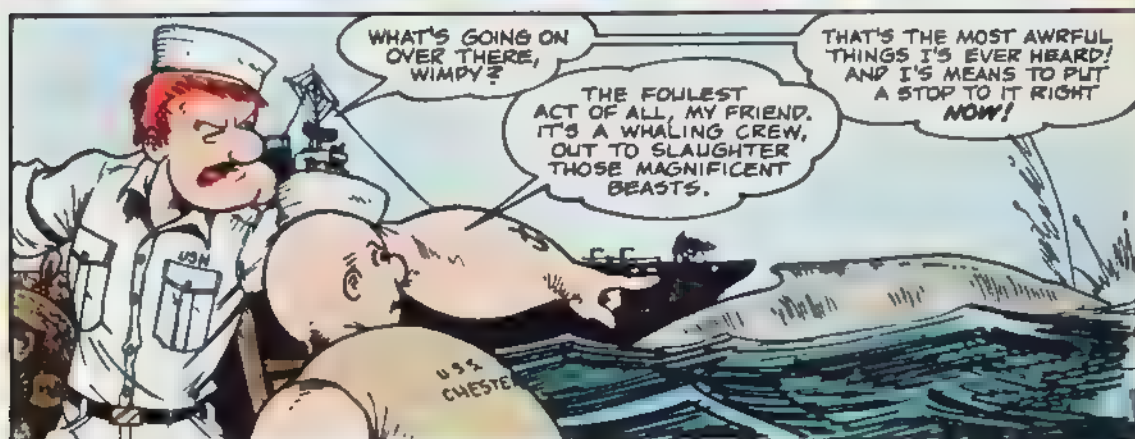
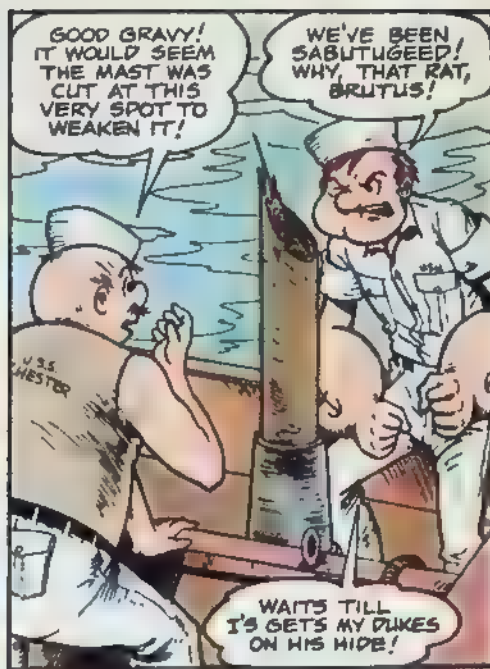
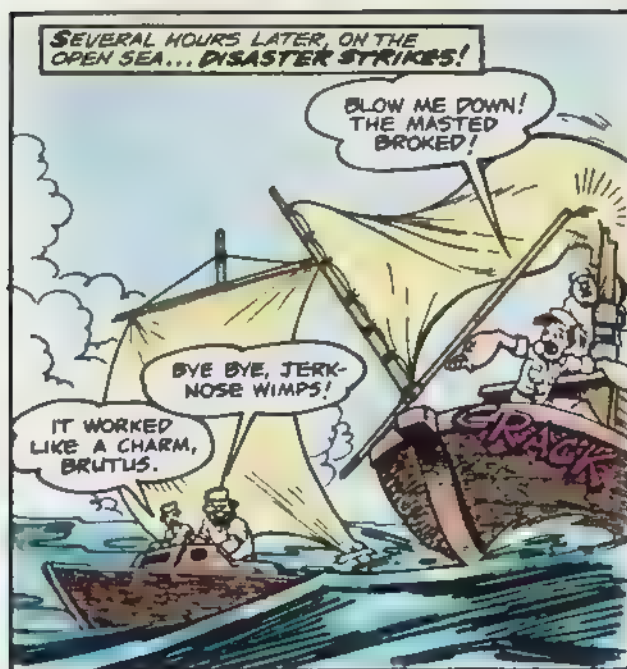


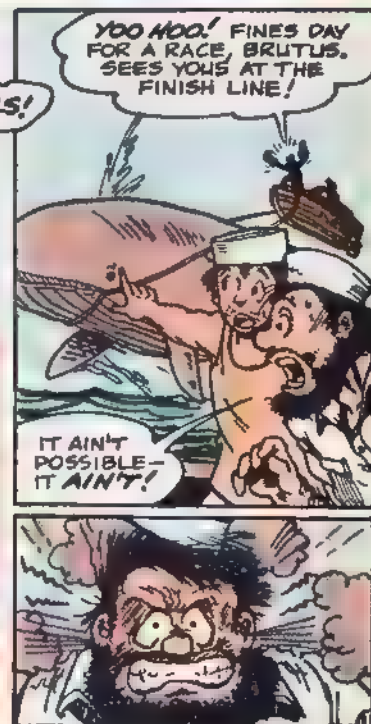
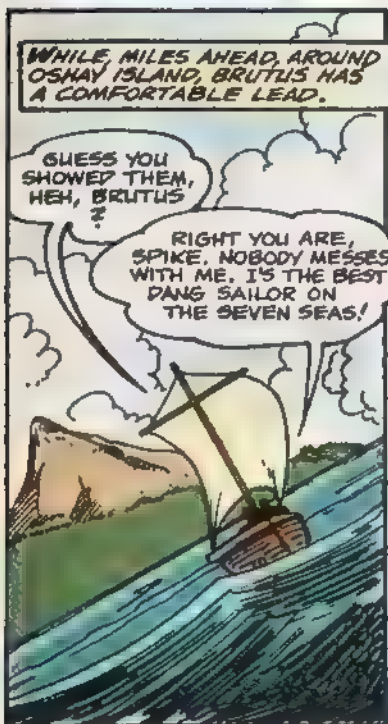
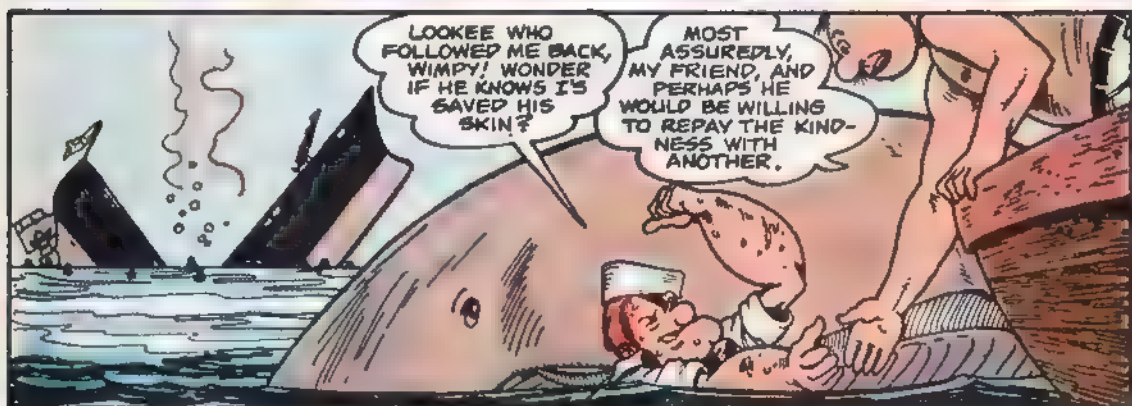
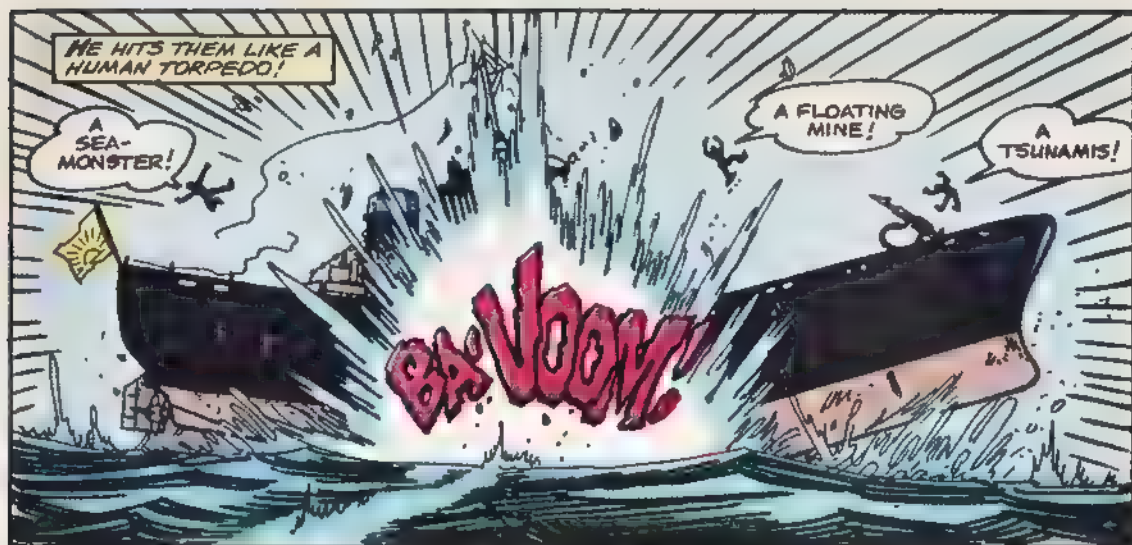
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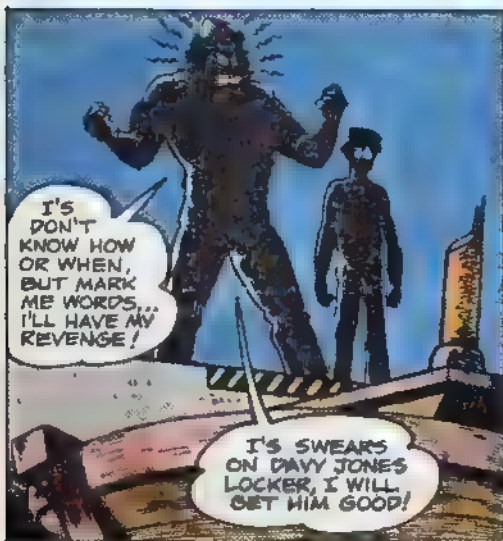
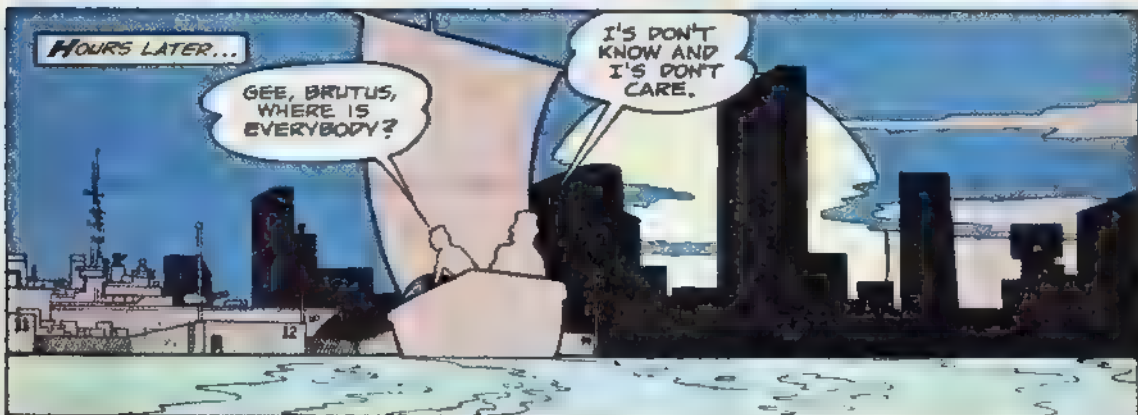
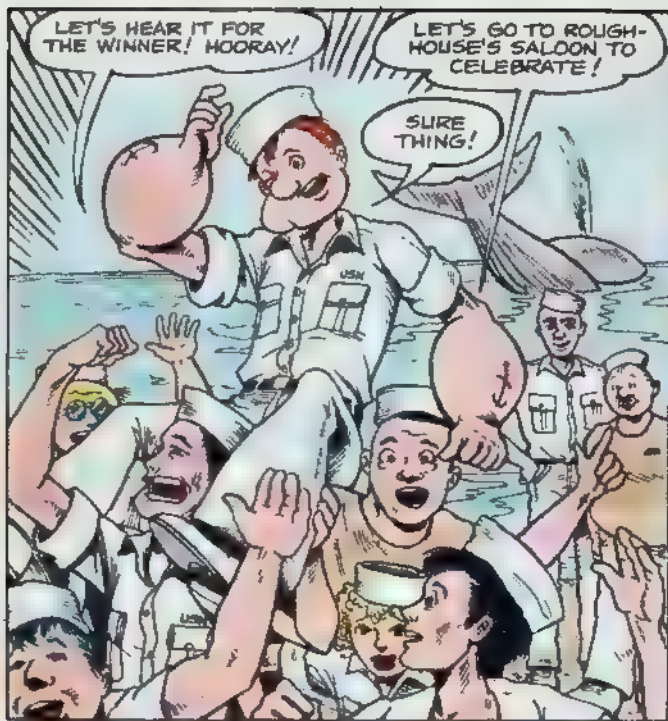
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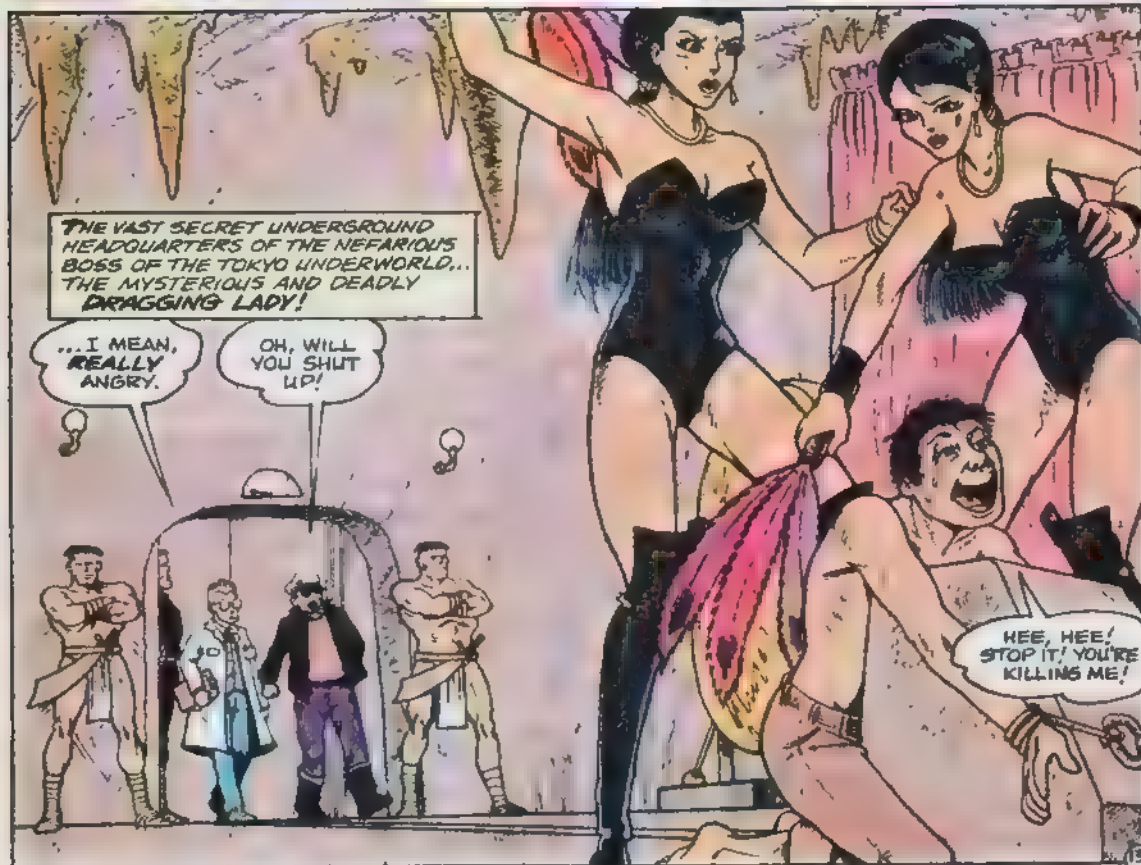
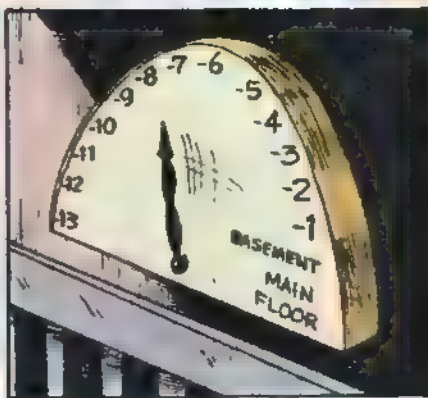
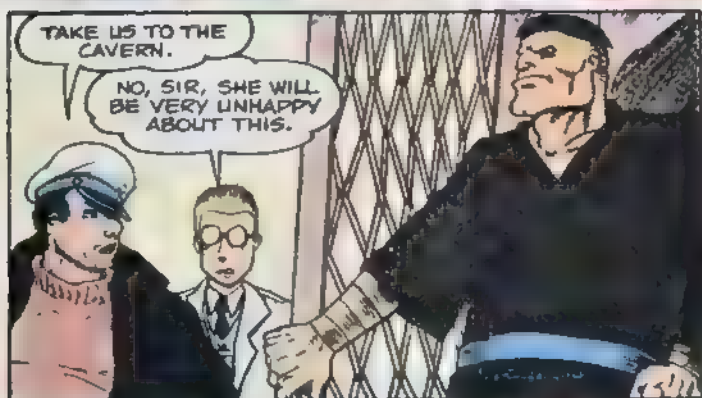
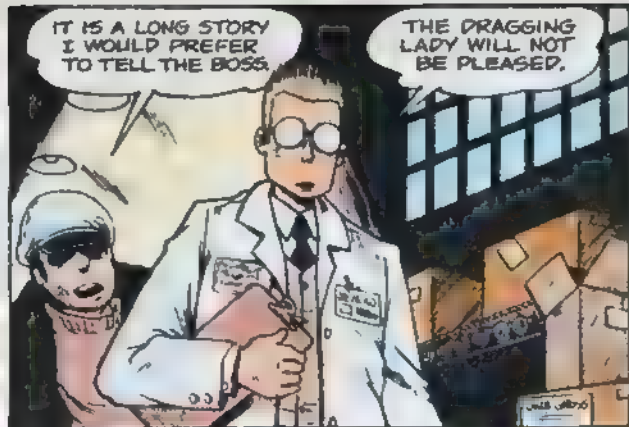
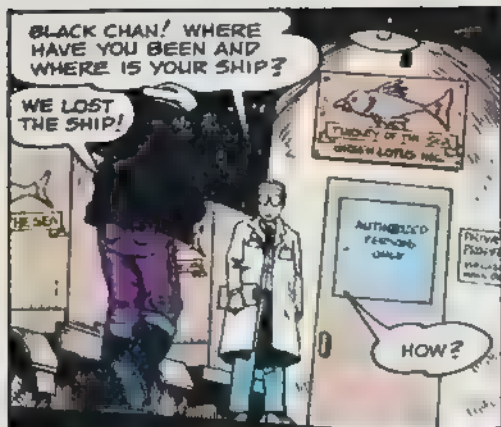


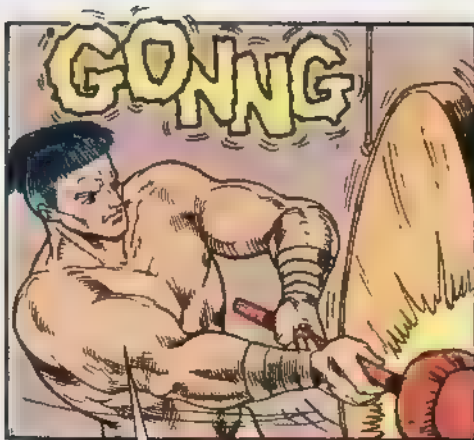












BOW
BEFORE THE
EMPRESS OF
CRIME, THE
DRAGGING
LADY.

CHAPTER THREE

FOUR HUNDRED POUNDS OF THE MEANEST
WOMAN WHO EVER WOLFED DOWN A DOZEN
BURGERS...THE DRAGGING LADY.*

AND YOU THOUGHT
WE COULDN'T SPELL
'DRAGON'. HA!

AH, GOOD
CAPTAIN CHAN,
RETURNED WITH
ANOTHER ILLEGAL
WHALE CATCH,
I PRESUME.

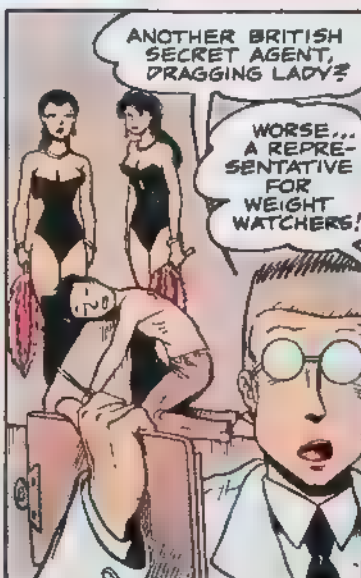
ER...
NOT EXACTLY,
DRAGGING
LADY.



WHAT DOES
THAT MEAN?

OOOOOO
STOP IT!
I CAN'T TAKE
ANY MORE.
NA NA NA

GIRLS,
TAKE A
BREAK!



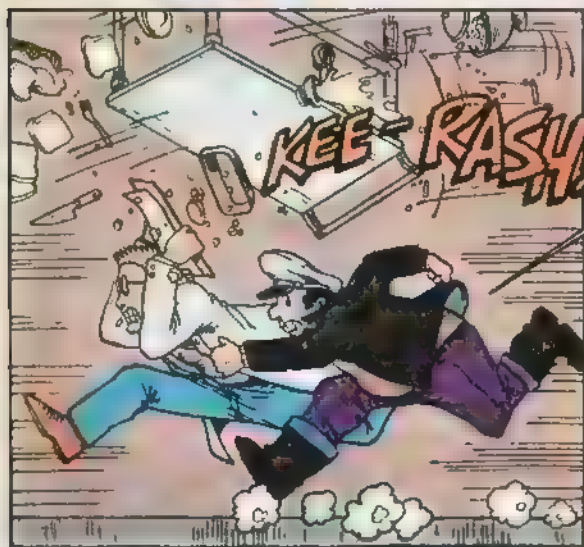
ANOTHER BRITISH
SECRET AGENT,
DRAGGING LADY?

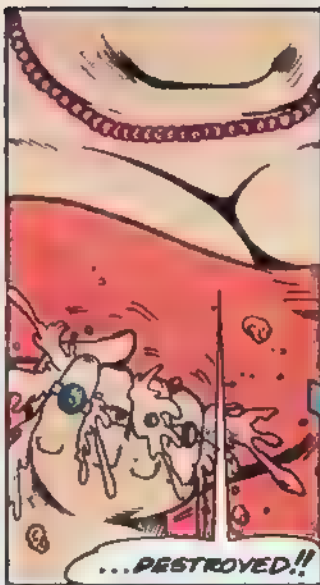
WORSE...
A REPRESENTATIVE
FOR WEIGHT
WATCHERS!



I LOVE EATING!
ALMOST AS MUCH AS
MAKING MONEY. NOW
TELL ME EXACTLY WHAT
HAPPENED TO YOUR
SHIP, BLACK CHAN,
AND BE BRIEF...

IT IS ALMOST
TIME FOR MY
EVENING MEAL!







BLAM!

I'M SORRY, OLD PAL, BUT IT'S ONLY A HALF YEN PIECE.

OH, THE LITTER HALF MUST HAVE BEEN RUN OVER BY A SEDAN, HUH?



WHAT NOW, DRAGGING LADY?

IF TWO MEN CAN'T BEAT THIS SAILOR MAN, THEN SEND MORE!

HOW MANY MORE?



SEND A HUNDRED!

YES, A HUNDRED OF MY MOST VILLAINOUS BUTCHERS, TO PUT AN END TO THIS SAILOR ONCE AND FOR ALL!



LATER THAT EVENING, IN A SHADY PART OF TOWN...

NOWS WHY WOULD WIMPY WANTS ME TO MEET HIM HERE? HIS NOTE WAS MIGHTY SUSPICIOUS!



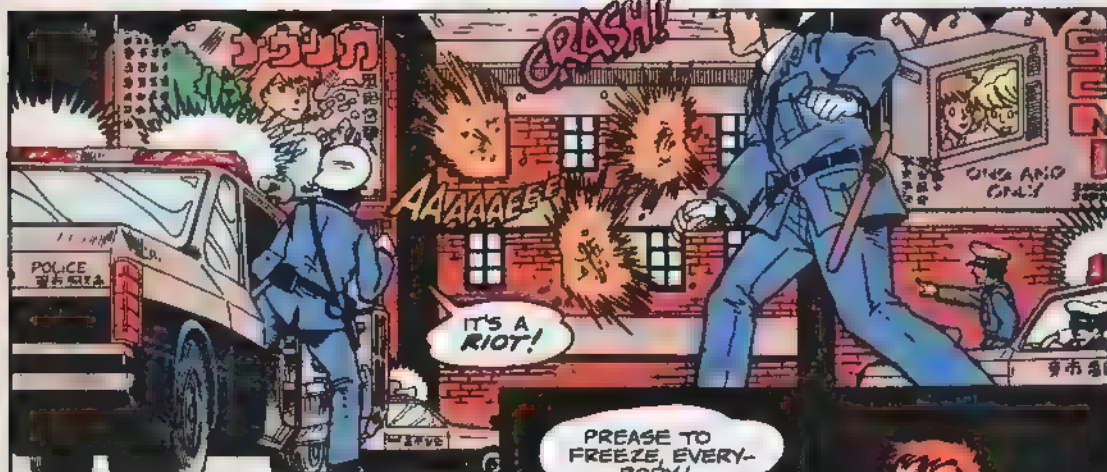
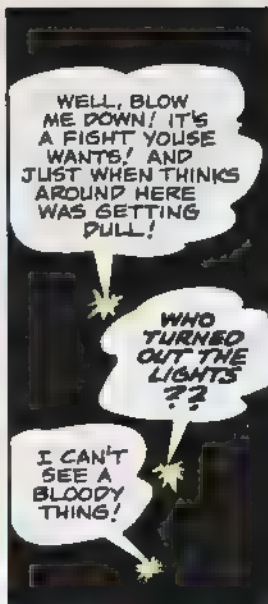
THIS IS THE PLACE, ALRIGHT... WONDERS IF WIMPY'S GONNA THROWS ME A SURPRISES BIRTHDAY PARTY?

SURPRISE INDEED!

HOWSPY FELLAS!
HEY, WIMPY, I'S
CAN'T HEAR YOU
WITH THAT RAGS
IN YOURS MOUTH.

GGRGGR

GET HIM!

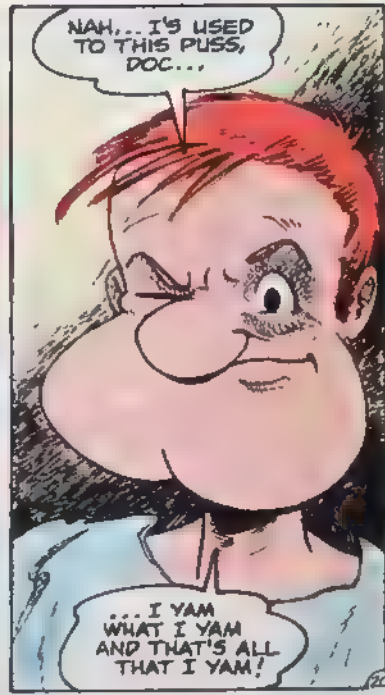
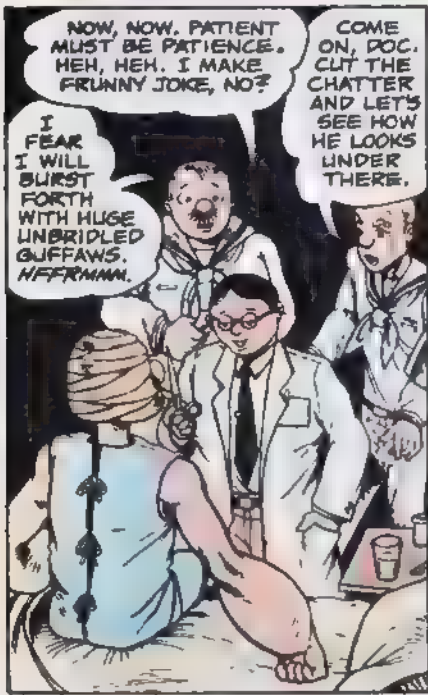
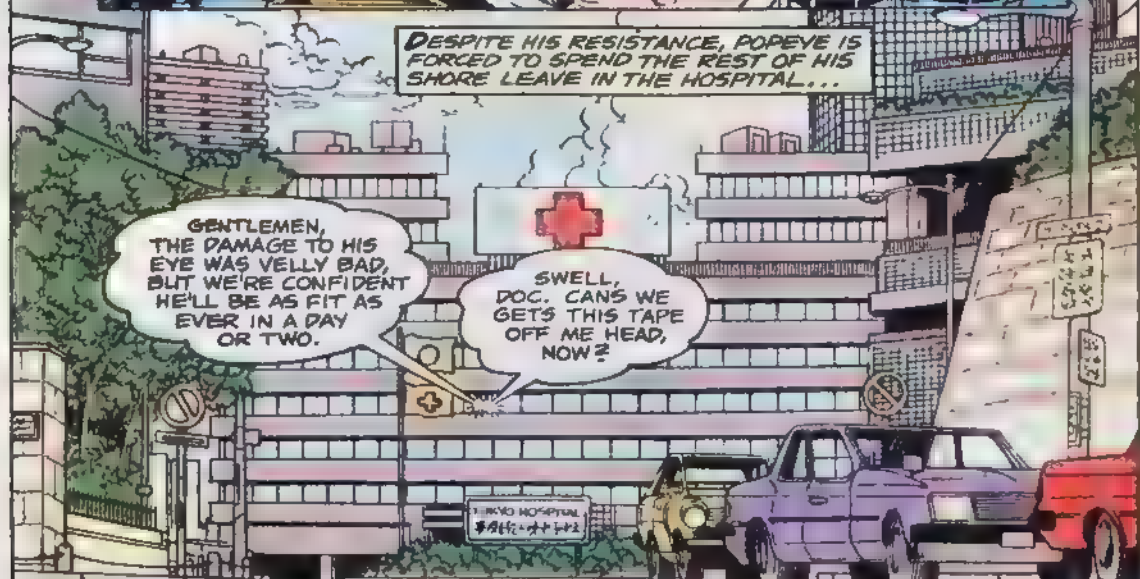


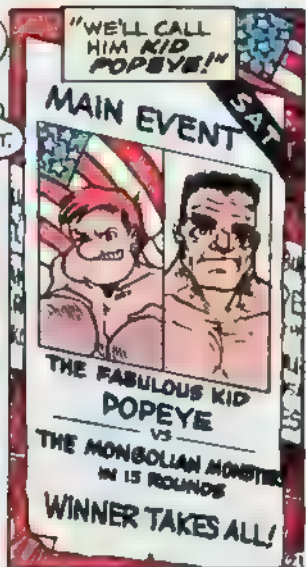


DESPITE HIS RESISTANCE, POPEYE IS
FORCED TO SPEND THE REST OF HIS
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GENTLEMEN,
THE DAMAGE TO HIS
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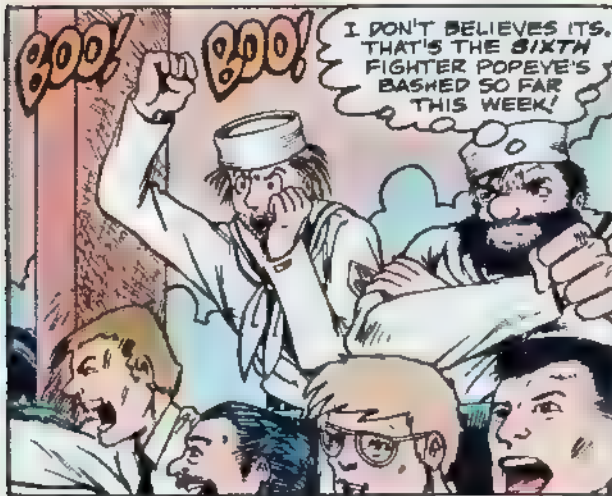
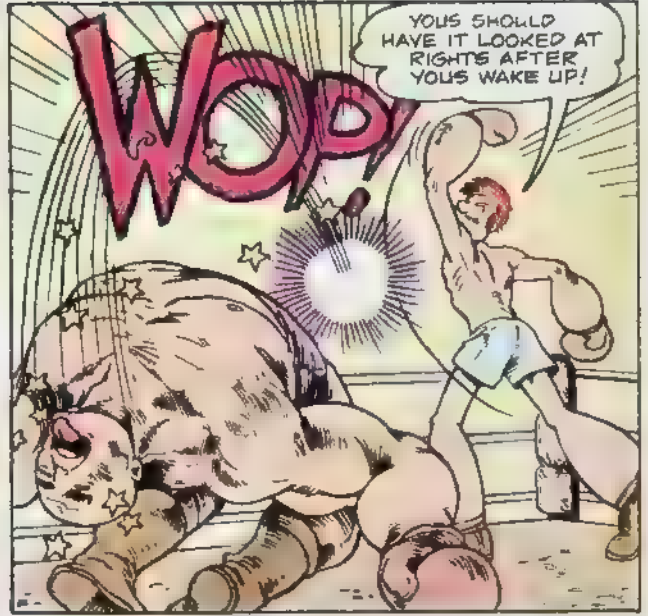
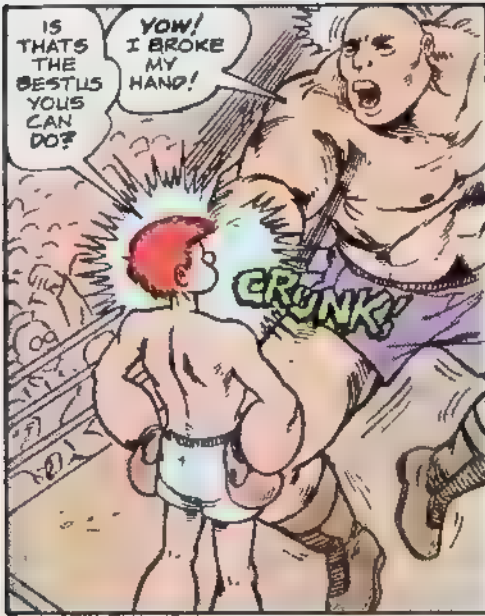
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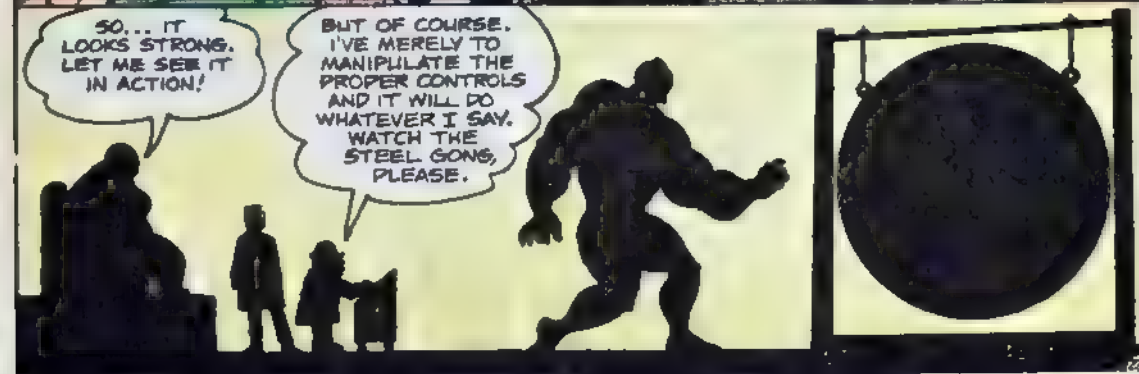
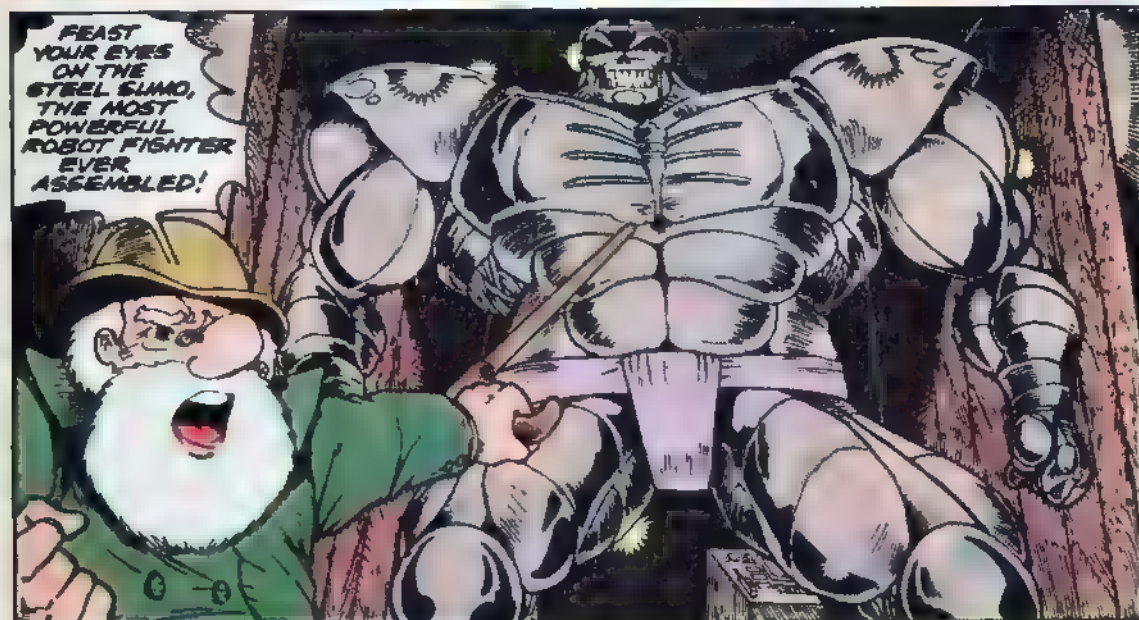
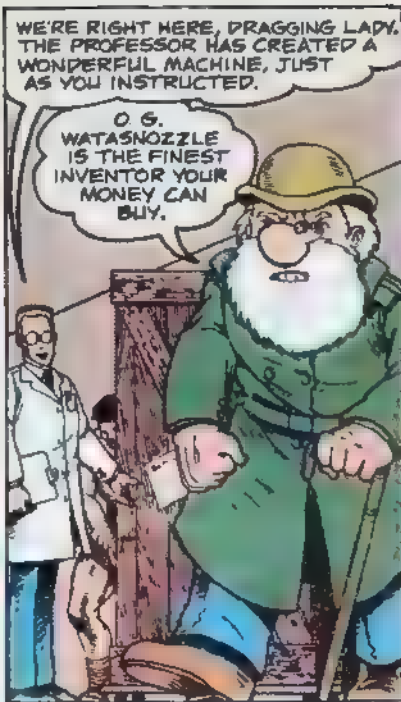
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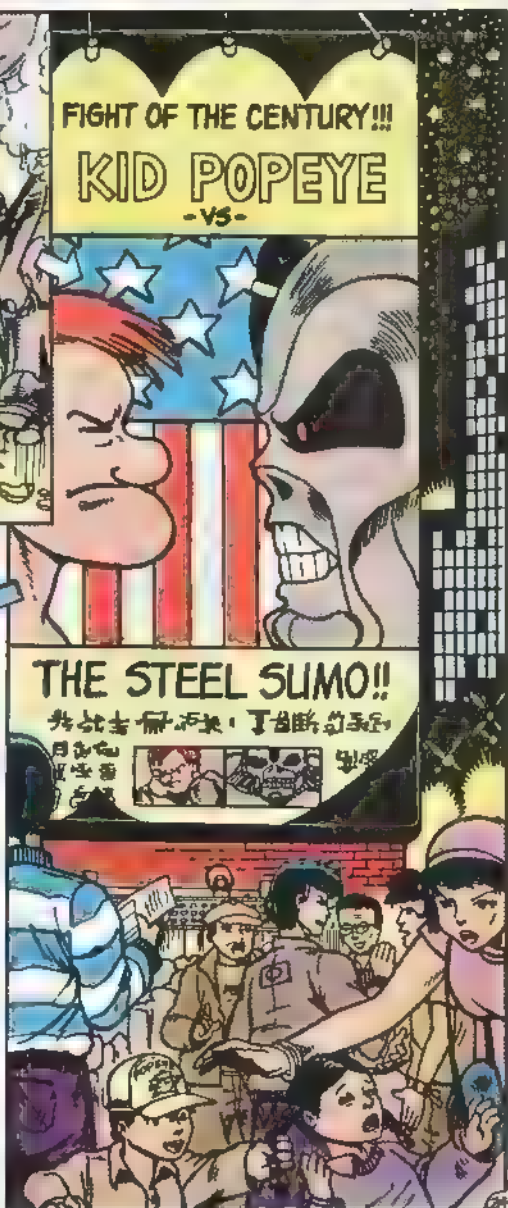
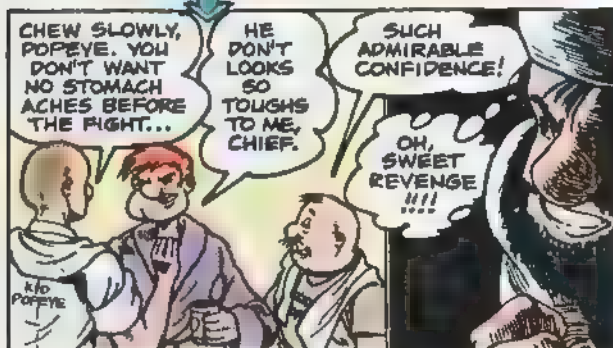
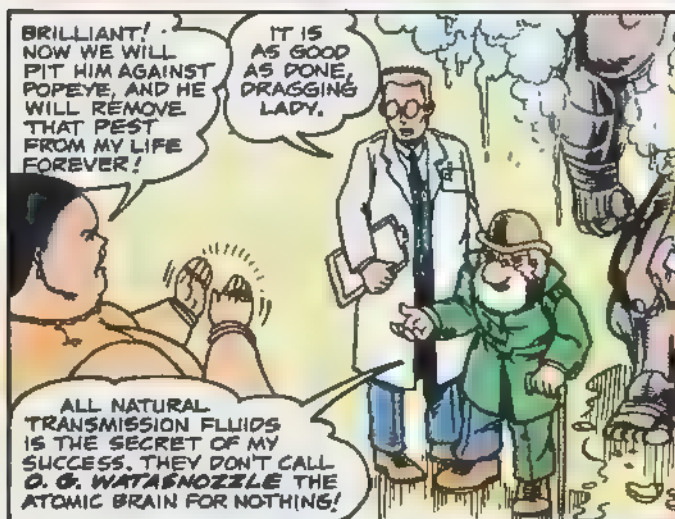
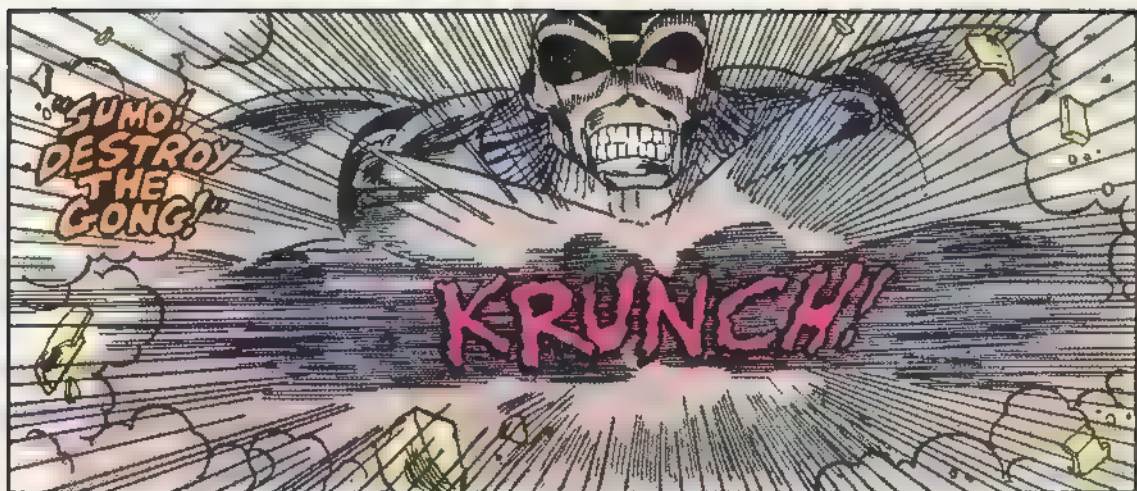


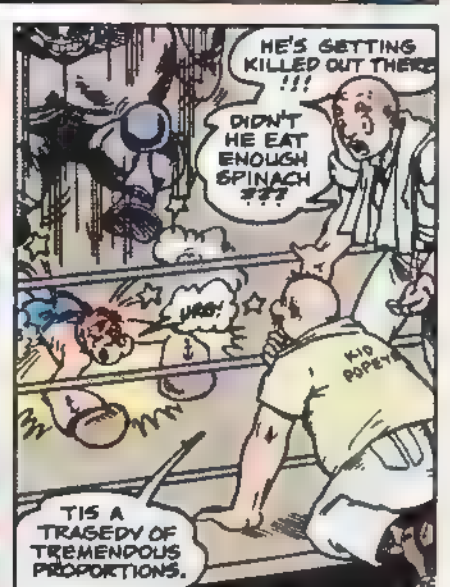
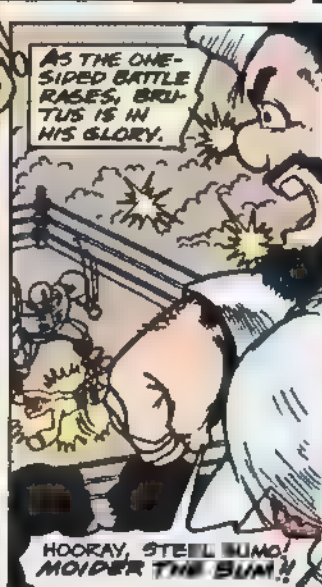
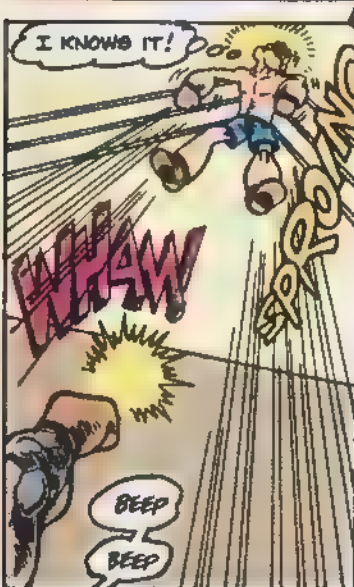
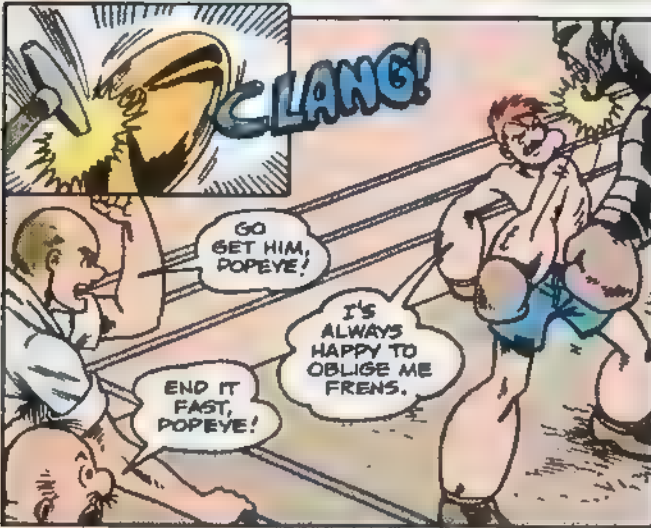
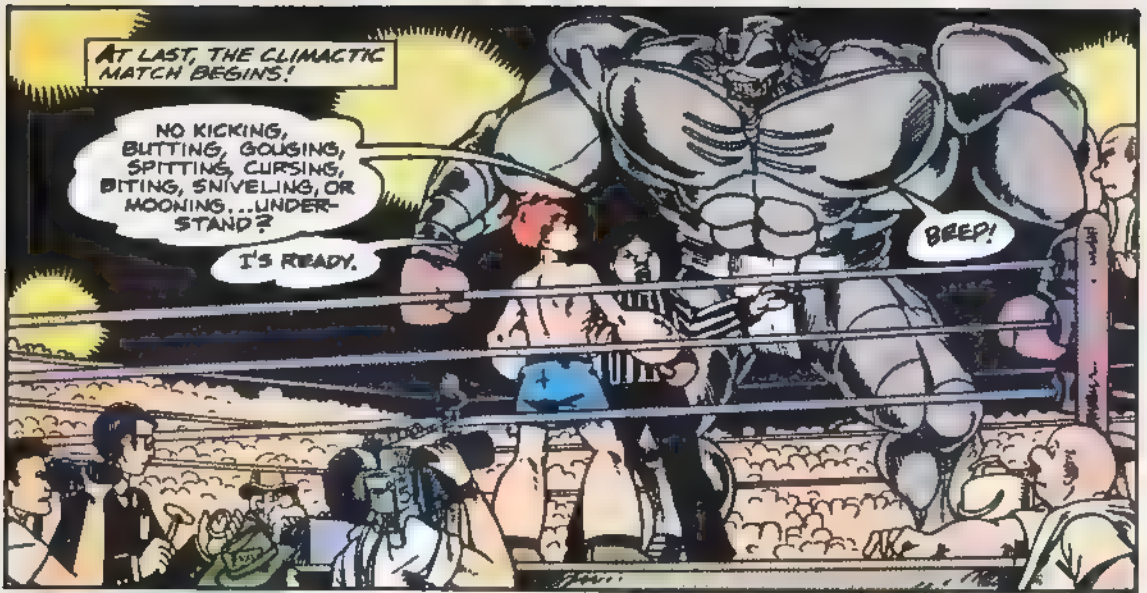
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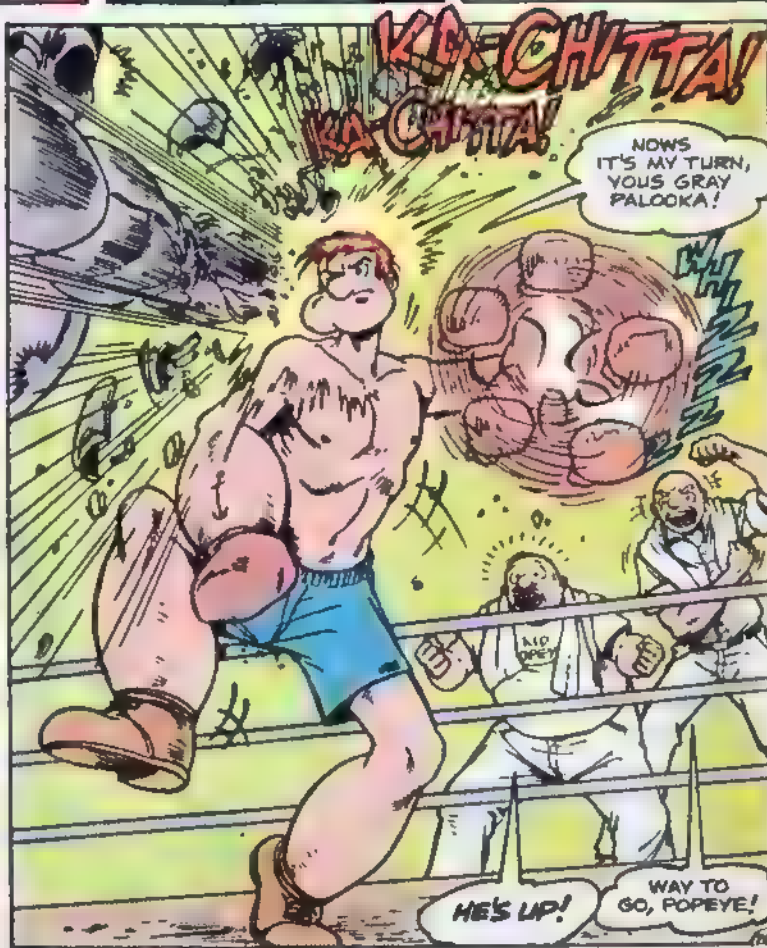
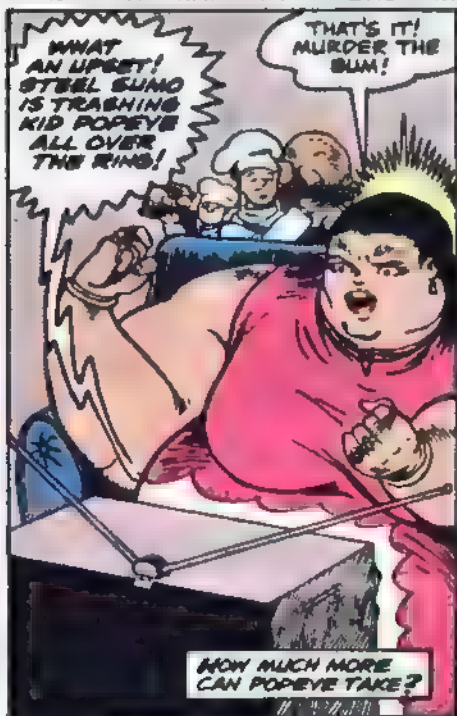


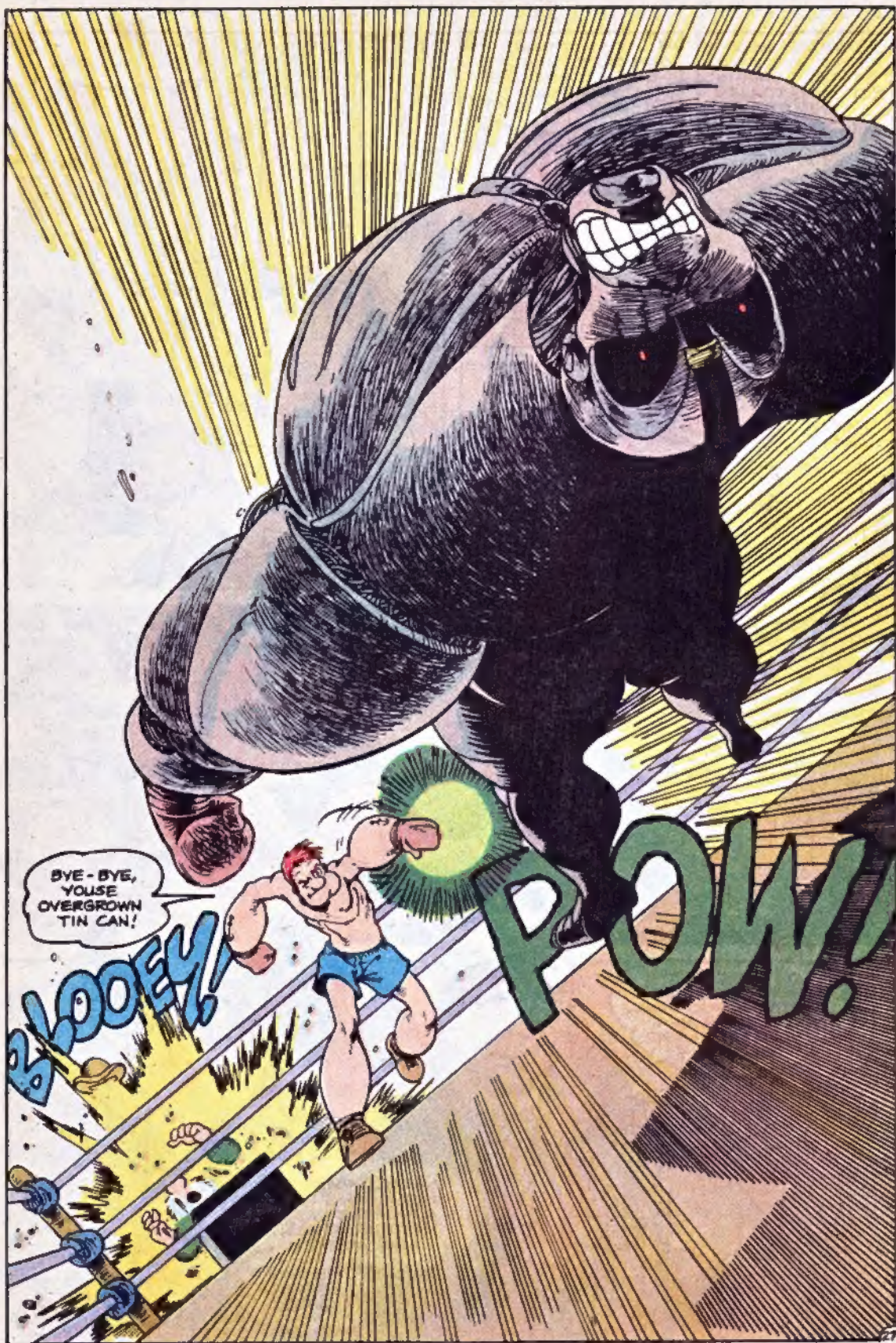


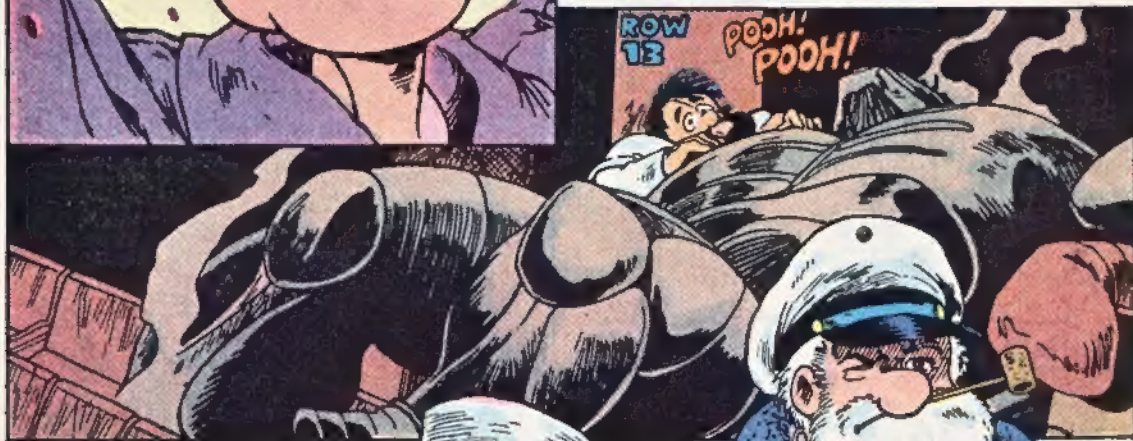
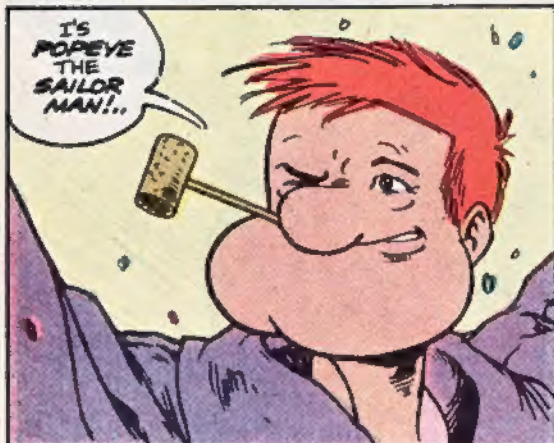




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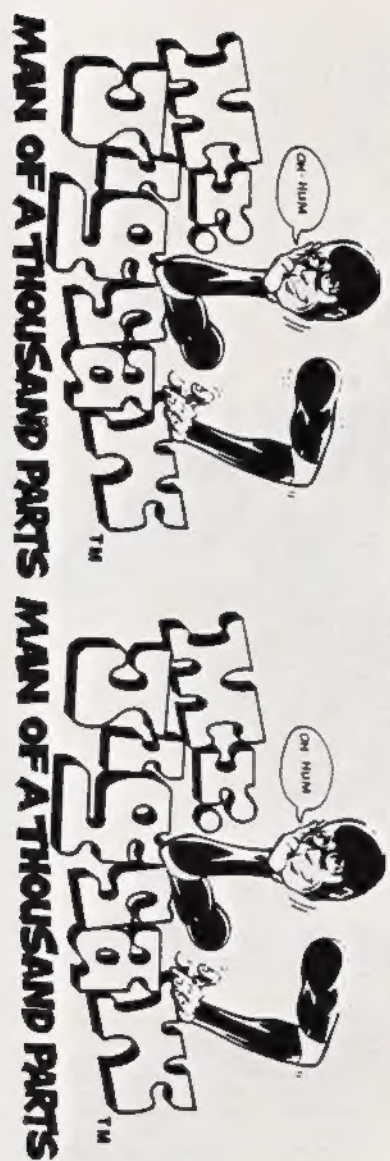
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